



SUMATRAN SKETCHES.



A PLANTATION HOUSE.

II.

SKETCH OF THE INHABITANTS.

THE island of Sumatra is subject partly to native sovereigns, and is partly under the influence of the Dutch. The independent states are Acheen, Siack, Indragiri, and Iambie on the coast, and the state of the Battas in the interior. The Dutch possessions extend over about half the surface of the island; they comprise the five regencies of Palembang, Lampong, Bencoolen, Padang, and Ayer Banghis. The great bulk of the inhabitants have been divided into five nations, viz., the Acheenese, the Battas, the Malays, the Lampongs, and the Rejangs or Sumatrans.

The Acheenese occupy the most northern part of the island: they are taller stouter, and darker than the

other tribes; they are also more active and industrious, and display considerable address and dexterity in business. They are Mohammedans, and practice the ceremonies of their religion with some strictness.

The Battas occupy the western coast; they are of inferior stature to the Malays, and of fairer complexion; they are fond of horse flesh, and fatten horses with great care for food. They can read and write, and have made considerable progress in the arts and manners of civilized life, and yet they are fond of human flesh, and will eat their prisoners of war and criminals condemned to death. They are heathens, and acknowledge three deities as rulers of the world.

The Malays occupy, exclusively, the great plain from the river Rakan on the north, to that of Masusi on the south, and also the shores north of the Rakan river, as

far as Timian. They are also in possession of the table-land of Menanggaban, the inhabitants of which are distinguished for their advanced state of civilization, while the Malays on the shores of the Strait of Malacca are miserable pirates. The Malays are Mohammedans.

The Lampongs occupy the southern part of the island, and do not essentially differ from the Rejangs, or Sumatrans, who inhabit the west coast, from the river Tabuyong on the north, to the river Padang-guchi on the south, and also occupy most of the mountain region south of Menanggaban. With respect to the encroachments of foreign manners and opinions, introduced by the Malays from the north, and the Javanese from the south, they are placed in what may be termed a central situation, which gives them a claim to originality superior to that of the other inhabitants. They are a people whose form of government and whose laws extend, with very little variation, over a considerable part of the island: they have a proper language, and a perfect written character: so that an account of the Rejangs will apply for the most part to the inhabitants of the island in general. They are below the middle stature; slightly formed, but well shaped, and particularly small at the wrists and ankles. The women have the preposterous custom of flattening the noses, and compressing the heads of children newly born. They likewise pull out the ears of infants, to make them stand at an angle from the head. Their eyes are dark and clear; the hair is strong and of a shining black, and it is the custom from an early age to keep it constantly moist with cocoa-nut oil. The hair of the women is sometimes long enough to reach the ground. The men have no beard. The boys, as they approach the age of manhood, rub their chins, upper-lips, and other parts of the body with quick-lime, which destroys the roots of the hair. The few stragglers which afterwards appear are plucked out from time to time with tweezers. Their complexion is properly yellow, wanting the red tinge that constitutes a tawny or copper colour.

Persons of superior rank encourage the growth of their hand-nails, particularly those of the fore and little fingers, to an extraordinary length; frequently tinging them red with the juice of a shrub. They also tinge the nails of the feet, which, being uncovered, receive much attention.

The natives of the hills are subject to those monstrous wens in the throat which have been observed of the inhabitants of mountainous districts in Europe. They do not imagine that the disease exerts an injurious influence on the health, and therefore attempt no remedy for it.

The original clothing of the Sumatrans is similar to that of the South Sea Islanders in general; their working dress being made of what is called Otabeitean cloth. This is the inner bark of a tree beaten out to the degree of fineness required; and is the more perfect in proportion as it resembles the softer kind of leather. Some of it is equal in quality to the most delicate kid skin. The texture of the South Sea cloth, however, generally bears a resemblance rather to paper, or to the products of the loom. The country people dress with much more simplicity than the Malays of the coast; they regard them as coxcombs, who lay out all their substance on their backs; whilst in their turns they are regarded by the Malays with contempt, as unpolished rustics.

Both sexes have the extraordinary custom of filing, and otherwise disfiguring their teeth, which are naturally very white and beautiful from the simplicity of their food. For files they make use of small whetstones, of different degrees of fineness, and the patients lie on their back during the operation. Many, particularly the women of the Lampong country, have their teeth rubbed down quite even with the gums; others have them formed in points; and some file off no more than the outer coat and extremities, in order that they may the better receive and retain the jetty blackness, with which they almost universally adorn them. The black used on these occasions is the empyreumatic oil of the coco-nut shell. When this is not applied, the filing does not by destroying what we term the enamel, diminish the

whiteness of the teeth; but the use of betel renders them black, if pains be not taken to prevent it. The great men sometimes set theirs in gold, by casing, with a plate of that metal, the under row; and this ornament, contrasted with the black dye, has, by lamp or candle-light, a very splendid effect. It is sometimes indented to the shape of the teeth, but more usually quite plain. They do not remove it either to eat or sleep. At the age of about eight or nine, they bore the ears and file the teeth of the female children; which are ceremonies that must necessarily precede their marriage.

The women sometimes make use of a white cosmetic called *purpur*, in order to render the skin fine, smooth, and soft. It is prepared from fine rice steeped for a long time in water, until it ferments, during which process the water becomes of a deep red colour and highly putrid, when it is drained off, and fresh water added frequently, until it is no longer coloured and the rice begins to subside in the form of a fine white paste. It is then exposed to the sun to dry, and being reduced to a powder, ginger is mixed with it, together with the leaves of a plant which impart a peculiar odour, and, as is supposed, a cooling quality. They also add the flowers of maize, sandal wood, and musk seeds. All these ingredients being moistened, and well mixed together, are made up into little balls. In applying the cosmetic, these balls are moistened with a drop of water, rubbed between the hands, and then on the face, neck, and shoulders. They are sparing in its use, from the fear that by stopping the pores of the skin, fever may be produced. Europeans in India use it with good effect to remove that troublesome complaint called "the prickly heat." The Sumatran girls, as well as our English maidens, have faith in the virtues of morning dew as a beautifier.

The villages of the Sumatrans are always situated on the banks of a river or lake, for the convenience of bathing, and of water carriage. An eminence of difficult ascent is usually preferred for the sake of security. The access to them is by foot-ways, narrow and winding, of which there are seldom more than two; one to the country, and the other to the water; the latter often so steep as to render it necessary to cut steps in the cliff or rock. The villages are surrounded with abundance of fruit-trees, some of considerable height; and the neighbouring country being to a certain extent cleared for the rice and pepper plantations; these villages appear at a distance merely as clumps of trees. The rows of houses commonly form a quadrangle, with passages or lanes, at intervals, between the buildings. In the midst of the square stands the town-hall, a room of from fifty to a hundred feet long, and twenty or thirty wide, without division, and open at the sides, except when, on particular occasions, it is hung with mats or chintz. It is, however, always sheltered by the deep overhanging roof.

The frequency of earthquakes is a sufficient reason for the unsubstantial mode of building. The frames of the houses are of wood, the underplate resting on pillars of about six or eight feet in height. For the floorings they lay whole bamboos close to each other, and attach them at the ends to the timbers. Across these are laid laths of split bamboo, of the length of the room, which are tied down with threads of the rattan, and over these are usually spread mats of different kinds. This sort of flooring has an elasticity alarming to strangers when they first tread on it. The sides of the house are generally closed in with laths of bamboo, or with the bark of a tree. The roof is usually of palm leaves, strengthened and supported by rafters of bamboo; but the most durable kind of covering is with a vegetable production called *iju*, so nearly resembling horsehair, as scarcely to be distinguished from it. It envelopes the stem of a species of palm, and is used for many purposes. It is bound on as a thatch, sometimes over narrow split bamboos, in which case the roof is so durable as never to require renewal, the *iju* being, of all vegetable substances, the least prone to decay, and, for this reason, it is a common practice to wrap a quantity of it round the

ends of timbers or posts which are to be fixed in the ground. The houses are ascended by means of a piece of timber, or stout bamboo, cut in notches, as shown in the frontispiece. Apprehension of danger from wild beasts probably suggested this rude expedient in preference to more regular and commodious steps. This ladder is sometimes taken up at night. There is a story told of an elephant, which attempting to pass under one of these houses, stuck by the way; but disdaining to retreat, carried it, with the family it contained, on his back, to a considerable distance.

The furniture of the houses is very simple, and consists of but few articles. The bed is a mat of fine texture, with a number of pillows worked at the ends, and adorned with a shining substance resembling foil. A sort of canopy or valance, formed of various-coloured cloths, hangs over-head. Instead of tables they have large wooden salvers with feet, round each of which three or four persons dispose themselves, and on these are placed the brass waiters which hold the cups that contain their curry, or matted vessels filled with rice. They sit either on the haunches, or on the left side. They are scrupulous in using the right hand for eating with; the left hand being reserved for less cleanly offices. They take up the rice and other food between the thumb and finger, and dexterously throw it into the mouth by the action of the thumb, frequently dipping their hands in water as they eat. Some of their utensils, such as coarse chinaware, are imported by the eastern praws: earthen pipkins are also made in small quantity; but the original Sumatran vessel for boiling rice, and which is still much used for that purpose, is the *bamboo*; "that material of general utility, with which bountiful Nature has supplied an indolent people." By the time the rice is cooked, the vessel is nearly destroyed by the fire, but it resists the flame so long as there is any moisture within it.

Water is conveyed from the spring in cylinders of bamboo, five or six feet long; or in cups, formed of a number of single joints of the same material put together in a basket. It is drunk out of a sort of calabash, a hole being made in the side of the neck, and another at top for vent. In drinking, the people generally hold the vessel at a distance above their mouths, and catch the stream as it falls; the liquid descending to the stomach without the action of swallowing. The food is mostly vegetable, but the flesh of the buffalo, goat, and fowls, is often served up. A great diversity of curries is usually served up at the same time in small vessels, each flavoured, to a nice discerning taste, in a different manner; and in this consists all the luxury of their tables. Whatever the quantity or variety of other food may be, rice is always supplied, and it is eaten largely with every dish, and often with salt and chili pepper only. It is prepared by boiling, in a manner peculiar to India; its perfection, next to cleanness and whiteness, consisting in its being, when thoroughly dressed and soft to the heart, at the same time whole and separate. Mr. Marsden says that this is effected by putting into the vessel in which it is boiled, a quantity of water sufficient to cover it; letting it simmer slowly; taking off the water by degrees with a spoon, that the grain may dry, and removing it when just short of burning.

The Sumatrans of the interior country, although partaking of some of the Malayan vices, are generally of a mild, peaceable and forbearing character; yet they are quick of apprehension, and often exhibit much penetration and sagacity, but they are careless and improvident of the future, because Nature supplies whatever she has made requisite for their existence. They have gained little or no advantage from the science, arts, and manufactures of Europeans: but though attached to their own habits, they are sensible of their inferiority, and readily admit the preference to which the attainments of the English in science entitle them. Mr. Marsden says,

I have heard a man exclaim, after contemplating the structure and uses of a house-clock, 'Is it not fitting that such as *we*, should be slaves to people who have the ingenuity to invent, and the skill to construct, so wonderful a machine as this?' 'The sun' (he added) 'is a machine of this nature!' 'But who winds it up?' (said his companion.) 'Who but *Allah!*' (he replied.)

There are, however, some particular branches of manufacture in which the Sumatrans excel. They exhibit the curious ingenuity of the savage in carving wood and ivory into grotesque unnatural shapes. In cane and basket work they are neat and expert: in their gold and silver filagree work they are unrivalled. They manufacture silk and cotton cloths of varied colours, for domestic use, some of the patterns of which are said to be prettily fancied: but their apparatus for weaving is of the rudest description.

The Sumatrans have no form of worship of any kind: they entertain many superstitious beliefs, and a confused notion of some superior beings who have the power of rendering themselves visible or invisible, and of doing good or evil at pleasure. Nothing can more forcibly express the absence of religion among this people than the fact that their language contains no name for the Deity. They have an imperfect notion of a metempsychosis, and seem to think that tigers are actuated with the spirits of departed men, for no consideration will prevail on a countryman to catch or to wound a tiger, except in self-defence, or immediately after a friend or relative has been destroyed. They talk of a place in the country where the tigers have a court, and maintain a regular form of government, in towns, the houses of which are thatched with women's hair. The alligators are also regarded with superstitious terror, and are very destructive on account of the practice of bathing in the rivers constantly adopted by the natives. Mr. Marsden says that few or no attempts have ever been made by missionaries or others to convert the inhabitants of the island to Christianity, and that this neglect is one cause that the interior of the country has been so little known to the civilized world.

Lady Raffles describes, in amusing terms, the sensation created by her first appearance among the people of the Tiga-blas country, who had never before seen a white. They seemed to be struck with amazement, and the question was not 'who is that?' but 'what is that?'

The disguise of dress, and, to them the extraordinary appearance of fairness, were unaccountable. With all the wonder of ignorance, they immediately conceived that there must be something supernatural; and mothers pressed in crowds, imploring to have their children touched as a preservative from all future evil. It was in vain to urge fatigue, to entreat to be excused; no one liked to lose so easy an opportunity of insuring future good, and the noise, the pressure, the confusion, were not a little amusing; when one crowd was satisfied a fresh collected, and it would be difficult to guess the number on whom was bestowed this slight but coveted act of kindness.

At Solaya, Lady Raffles was left alone in a native house, with a sepoy stationed as a sentry at the door to keep the people away; but they collected in such numbers that they overpowered him, and hundreds rushed into the house to gaze and express their astonishment; after this had been endured for a length of time, they were entreated to retire, and allow some repose to be taken; with one accord they seated themselves in a moment, saying, of all things they should like to see the mode of sleeping, and that they would watch all the time, and only sit and look; and no entreaty could prevail upon them to go away. On another occasion, crowds assembled to see how Lady Raffles took food, and during the night strange faces were continually seen peeping through the curtain which parted off her place of rest from the numerous inmates of the same room.

EASY LESSONS IN CHESS.

XVII.

THE KING'S GAMBIT.

WHITE.

1. K. P. two squares.
2. K. B. P. two squares.
3. K. Kt. to K. B. third square.
4. K. R. P. two squares.
5. K. Kt. to K. fifth square.
6. K. B. to Q. B. fourth square.

BLACK.

1. K. P. two squares.
2. P. takes P.
3. K. Kt. P. two squares.
4. K. Kt. P. one square.
5. K. R. P. two squares.
6. K. R. to K. R. second square.

In the last lesson, in order to protect his K. B. P., Black played, as his sixth move, K. Kt. to R. third square; his present move is the one preferred by Philidor, Ponziani, and other authorities.

7. Q. P. two squares.
8. K. Kt. to Q. third square.

7. Q. P. one square.
8. Gambit Pawn one square, i.e. P. to K. B. sixth square.

If you take this P. with your K. Kt. P. Black will play K. B. to K. second, winning your K. R. P., and having the best of the game. You therefore play—

9. K. Kt. P. one square.

Black has now, on his King's side, three pawns very strongly placed, and one of them is a passed pawn within two squares of being queened. The first chess authorities have declared that White has a game "lost by its nature." Recently, however, M. Kieseritzkij, a young Livonian chess-player resident in Paris, by an attentive study of the position, arrived at an opposite conclusion; and challenged any four players in Europe to play out four games at the same time, they taking the black pieces and he the white. Accordingly, four first-rate players, MM. Laroche, Lecrivain, Chamouillet, and Devinck, entered the lists with the bold young Livonian. The games were played by correspondence, under agreement that all parties should make one move twice a week. The match lasted six months. M. Kieseritzkij won against MM. Laroche and Lecrivain, and lost against the other two antagonists.

Mr. George Walker, who has reported these games, is of opinion that Kieseritzkij decidedly overtasked his powers, and injured the force of his reasoning on the point at issue, by playing the four games all at once. Instead of fighting his adversaries one against four, he ought to have taken them in succession. Mr. Walker, therefore, thinks that the present gambit offers a problem yet to be solved, and that for the present the arguments of the Livonian are tenable.

Of these four games we select two. In the first game M. Kieseritzkij plays the white pieces against M. Lecrivain. White has played nine moves, and Black eight. These are already given, and as the position stands upon the board, Black has to move.

10. Q. Kt. to Q. B. third square.
11. Q. P. one square.
9. K. Kt. to K. B. third square.
10. Q. B. to K. third square.
11. Q. B. home.

The tenth move of Black is very artful. By exchanging Bishops, White would have weakened his own forces, and strengthened his adversary's array of pawns. To prevent which you move on the Q. P., thereby closing up the attack of your K. B. This was Black's object, and having effected it, the Q. B. returns quietly home.

12. Q. B. to K. B. fourth square.
13. K. P. one square.
14. K. Kt. takes P.
15. K. to K. B. second square.
12. K. B. to K. Kt. second square.
13. P. takes P.
14. Q. B. to K. B. fourth square.

Mr. Walker has a remark on this move:—

The power of making this retreat, guarded so famously by adverse pawn, is a strong feature in attack, and one of the keystones of the Livonian's argument.

16. K. R. to K. square.
15. Q. Kt. to Q. second square.
16. K. to K. B. square.

Black moves in order to avoid a check by discovery, a species of check which is nearly always dangerous.

17. Q. P. one square.

This is a very good move.

16. K. R. takes Kt.
19. P. takes P.
20. K. R. to K. eighth sq. chg.
21. Q. B. takes Q.

17. Kt. takes Kt.
18. Q. B. to K. Kt. third square.
19. Q. takes P.
20. Kt. takes R.

If Black take Q. B. with Kt., you play Q. to her sixth square checking, and recovering the piece; therefore Black plays,

22. Q. Kt. P. takes K. B.
21. K. B. takes Q. Kt.

In order to win one of the Bishops, Black plays

22. Q. R. to Q. B.

but you save it by checking.

23. Q. B. to Q. sixth square chg.

If he take with Kt. you retake with Q. checking, and then move away or defend the K. B.

24. K. B. to Q. Kt. fifth square.
25. Q. B. to K. seventh square.
26. K. to his third square.
27. K. to K. B. fourth square.
28. Q. to Q. eighth square chg.
29. K. B. to Q. third square.
30. Q. B. takes Kt.
31. Q. R. to Q. Kt. square.
32. Q. to K. seventh square.
33. Q. takes K. B. P. checking.
34. B. takes B. checking.
35. Q. to K. eighth square.
23. K. to K. Kt. square.
24. Kt. to K. B. third square.
25. Kt. to K. fifth square checking.
26. Q. R. takes P. at Q. B. third sq. checking.
27. K. R. to K. Kt. second square.
28. K. to K. R. second square.
29. Kt. to Q. B. fourth square.
30. R. takes Q. B.
31. K. R. to K. Kt.
32. Q. Kt. P. one square.
33. K. R. interposes.
34. K. to K. R. third square.

At this point M. Lecrivain gave up the game.

It may seem (says Mr. Walker) as if the Livonian had flagged a little in his pace during the latter stage of this game, but it must be borne in mind that caution is necessary to the last.

For our second illustration of this remarkable opening, we give the successful defence of M. Devinck. The student will play the game as given at the head of this lesson, up to the ninth move of the White. M. Devinck's ninth move differs from that of the other three defenders, all of whom played K. Kt. to K. B. third square.

10. Q. B. P. one square.
11. K. Kt. to K. B. fourth square.
12. Q. B. takes K. B.
13. K. to K. B. second square.
14. Q. Kt. P. two squares.
15. Q. B. to K. third square.
16. Q. Kt. to Q. second square.
17. Q. to Q. B. second square.
18. Q. B. to K. Kt. fifth square.
19. K. P. one square.
9. Q. to K. B. third square.
10. K. B. to K. R. third square.
11. B. takes K. Kt.
12. K. Kt. to K. second square.
13. Q. Kt. to Q. B. third square.
14. K. Kt. to K. Kt. third square.
15. Q. to K. second square.
16. Q. Kt. to Q. square.
17. K. R. home.
18. K. B. P. one square.

A bold and skilful move, involving however some risk, of which M. Devinck well avails himself.

20. P. takes Kt.
21. Q. to K. Kt. sixth sq. chg.
22. K. R. P. takes P.
23. Q. to K. B. sixth square chg.
24. K. P. takes Q.
25. K. R. to K. R. fourth square.
26. Q. R. to K. B.
27. Kt. takes P.
28. B. takes Kt.
29. K. takes P.
19. K. Kt. takes K. P.
20. P. takes B.
21. K. to K. B. square.
22. Q. to K. Kt. second square.
23. Q. takes Q.
24. Q. B. to K. B. fourth square.
25. Q. Kt. to K. B. second square.
26. B. to K. Kt. third square.
27. P. takes Kt.
28. B. takes B.
29. K. R. to K. Kt. square.

The efforts of White, during the last five or six moves, have been directed to the safety of the advanced pawns; for this purpose he doubled his castles, sacrificed a knight, and exchanged a piece. This turned the game so much in favour of Black, that M. Kieseritzkij at this point resigned.

Before we conclude this lesson, it may be interesting to notice a defence of this gambit founded on an entirely different principle to the preceding.

1. K. P. two squares.
2. K. B. P. two squares.
3. K. Kt. to K. B. third square.
4. K. R. P. two squares.
5. K. Kt. to K. fifth square.
1. K. P. two squares.
2. P. takes P.
3. K. Kt. P. two squares.
4. K. Kt. P. on.

Thus far the moves are the same as before. Black now abandons his K. Kt. P., and plays

6. K. Kt. takes K. Kt. P.
5. Q. to K. second square.

It would not be good play for Black to take the K. P. checking, because you would interpose Q., and an

exchange of queens would leave you with the better game.

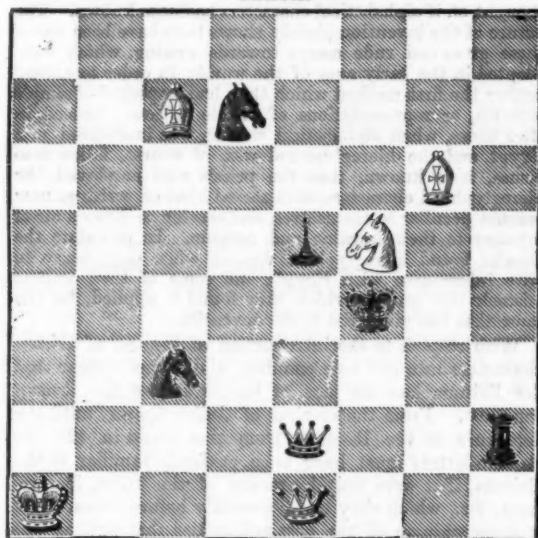
6. K. B. P. two squares.
7. P. takes P.

You could not of course take the pawn, and were therefore compelled to move your Kt. Your position is now very much constrained.

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| 8. Q. to K. R. fifth square chg. | 8. K. to Q. square. |
| 9. Q. to K. B. fourth square. | 9. K. P. one square, attacking your K. Kt. |
| 10. K. Kt. to K. Kt. fourth sq. | 10. P. takes P. checking. |
| 11. K. takes P. | 11. Q. P. one square. |
| 12. Q. takes P. at K. B. fourth sq. | 12. K. R. P. two squares. |
| 13. K. Kt. to K. third square. | 13. K. B. to K. R. third square. |
| 14. Q. to K. B. second square. | 14. K. Kt. to K. B. third square. |
| 15. K. to Q. square. | 15. K. Kt. to its fifth square. |
| 16. Kt. takes Kt. | 16. Q. B. takes Kt. checking. |
| 17. K. B. to K. second square. | 17. K. B. takes Q. B. |
| 18. K. B. takes Q. B. | 18. K. B. takes Q. Kt. P. and wins easily. |

PROBLEM XVIII.—*White to move first, and to give checkmate in four moves.*

BLACK.



WHITE.

THE ART OF WRITING.

I.

ORIGIN OF WRITTEN CHARACTERS.

WRITTEN characters form the great circulating medium of communication throughout society. Next to language itself, therefore, the art of writing must be deemed the most important agent of the civilization and well-being of man. Without the invention of written characters no authentic record of the past could have reached us; the uncertain voice of tradition would have been our only guide. Without written characters the inventions and discoveries of the most gifted of our race would have died with them, or would have been quickly perverted or lost to mankind through the misconstruction or neglect of individuals less highly endowed. Without this admirable art the progress in knowledge of each individual must have been slow and laborious. Gathering for himself, by careful observation and inquiry, the results of the experience of others, and studying as assiduously as possible the wonders of creation and the resources of art, how small, comparatively speaking, would be the progress of such a mind, and how painful the conviction that the information thus diligently acquired, and exceeding, perhaps, the general amount of knowledge possessed by his fellows, must all perish with him, or be imperfectly and inaccurately transmitted through the medium of language.

The art of writing, as the means of recording and

transmitting to a future age all the knowledge and acquirements of the human mind, is the grand source of improvement in philosophy, science, and the arts. The common transactions of life are also greatly facilitated by it. Situated at distant parts of the globe men may communicate with each other by means of this art with a facility that seems almost to annihilate the distance between them; while we all experience the advantage daily and hourly derived by the free and rapid interchange of communications from city to city, and (in the case of our metropolis) from street to street.

Reflecting on the benefits conferred by this art, and the treasures conveyed to us by its means; looking upon it as the vehicle made use of by Almighty Wisdom, to convey the knowledge of His will, and the instrument by which the wise, the holy, and the learned of all ages have laboured to promote the advancement of their fellow-creatures—we may well feel interested in the inquiry, "To whom are we indebted for so valuable a boon?" "Who invented the art of writing?"

Whence did the wondrous mystic art arise!
Of painting speech, and speaking to the eyes?
That we by tracing magic lines are taught
How both to colour and embody Thought!

This is an inquiry upon which volumes have been written in vain. After all the researches of the learned, we are obliged to confess that the era of this invention, as well as the name of the inventor, is involved in impenetrable obscurity. A learned and pious author has endeavoured to establish that the first written characters were those inscribed by the finger of God himself on the two tables of stones delivered to Moses in Mount Sinai. This opinion is not in accordance with the fact that the Book of Job contains several allusions to this art, and we know that there is good reason to believe that Job lived before the time of Moses. Thus in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Job, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses, we read, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!"

These notices of the existence of the art carry us back to a very remote age. Indeed, if we listen to the voice of tradition, and place confidence in that preserved by Josephus, or if we attach any importance to the legends of the Chaldeans, we must believe that writing was an antediluvian discovery.

There were, doubtless, many steps taken in slow succession before the discovery of alphabetic writing. Perhaps the earliest might have been that which is still employed among the untutored tribes of North American Indians, *i.e.*, the mode of recording events by picture painting of the rudest description. In the forests of North America, these paintings are occasionally met with, and exhibit to the eye of him who can rightly interpret their meaning, the principal events of the Indian's life. A copy of one of these historical paintings may be seen in the sixth volume of the *Archæologia*. The picture was originally painted with charcoal and bear's oil, on the trunk of a sugar-maple tree from which the bark had been peeled off about a foot square. The picture was explained by an Indian warrior to the gentleman who discovered it on the banks of the Muskegon river. A rude figure of a turtle, on the upper part of the picture, is the emblem or badge of the tribe to which the individual belonged. A singular mark near it is the personal mark or character, one such being invented by each Indian in his youth, and retained without alteration as his distinguishing mark through life. Horizontal lines denote the number of battles fought;—perpendicular lines show the number of warriors accompanying the individual to battle. A representation of the sun decorates one corner of the picture, and such of the lines as bend in an opposite direction to that luminary, indicate the march of the army north-

wards. In the middle of the picture are irregular lines denoting the course of rivers, and rough sketches of forts besieged by the Indians. The left side of the picture is decorated with crosses which mark the number of scalps taken, and whether belonging to males or females.

Joseph d'Acosta relates that on the first arrival of the Spanish squadron on the coast of Mexico, expresses were sent to Montezuma with exact representations of the ships, painted on cloth; in which manner the Mexicans kept their records, histories, and calendars, representing things that had bodily shapes in their proper figures, and those that had none, in arbitrary significant characters. Specimens of Mexican painting of this description have been preserved, and are justly considered as the most curious monuments of art, brought from the American continent*.

We can without difficulty imagine the gradual conversion of picture-painting into the hieroglyphical system of later times, which is still the only kind of writing in use among the Chinese. These people have no letters properly so called. The characters employed by them in writing, and which are true hieroglyphics, do not represent sounds, nor elementary articulations, but *ideas*. Thus a *house* is expressed by a special and particular character which never changes, although the Chinese at various periods may have used other words in the spoken tongue to designate their dwellings. The main fault indeed in hieroglyphic writing is its inability to express new names; thus if a person wished to send a written account from one part of China to another, relative to the late war, though he would be able to relate the fate of a battle, he would have no means of specifying the English ships engaged in the action, nor the names of the victorious generals. Special messengers of a superior order are therefore absolutely necessary to convey accurate intelligence among the Chinese, although it is true that the people, feeling the inconvenience of their system of writing, sometimes endeavour to express proper names by stripping the hieroglyphical characters of their significance, and converting them to the uses of true letters.

The system of writing by hieroglyphics is exceedingly cumbrous and difficult to the learner, and has also the great disadvantage above alluded to, and yet were it generally adopted, that is to say, were the Chinese symbols in universal use among mankind, every one would be able to read in his own tongue all the works of other nations without requiring to know a word of the spoken language of their respective authors. This singular result of the use of hieroglyphics is well illustrated by the Arabic numerals in common use among so many nations. These numerals are true hieroglyphics; the figure 4, for instance, expresses to the English, French, or German writer, &c., the idea of unity added four times, but in giving this hieroglyphic a name, the one calls it *four*, the other *quatre*, the other *vier*, and so on with other nations.

But neither the picture-painting of savage nations, nor the hieroglyphics of the more civilized, nor even the method of extending the resources of the hieroglyphical system by the use of a few arbitrary characters, could ever arrive at such perfection as to answer all the purposes of the full and perfect communication of ideas. The grand desideratum would still be "to fabricate characters to represent simple sounds, and to reduce those characters to so small a number as to be easily learned and preserved in the memory."

Whoever was the favoured individual that discovered the alphabetic or phonetic system of writing now in use among all nations, (except the Chinese) he must first have discovered that all the words of a spoken language are composed of a limited number of sounds or elementary articulations, and that these sounds

* In a Supplement on Mexico, *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. VI., p. 46, the reader will find some interesting details on the Mexican mode of writing.

might be represented with more or less of approach to the truth by symbols or letters to the number of from twenty-four to thirty.

Many passages in Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Clemens of Alexandria, prove that two or three kinds of writing were in use among the Egyptians, and that the one in which symbolical characters were employed was not the common vehicle of communication. On the contrary, such symbols had something of a sacred character about them, being unknown to the people, and only to be deciphered by the priesthood. Obelisks and pyramids were the great national records; but these were shut up from the people, until expounded by those who had the exclusive office of explaining them. From this it has been supposed that the Egyptians were influenced by a similar policy to that which long prevailed in modern Europe, and kept locked up as secrets the most popular and practical precepts of law and religion.

But this is certainly a mistake (says Dr. Blair). Hieroglyphics were undoubtedly employed, at first from necessity, not from choice or refinement; and would never have been thought of, if alphabetical characters had been known. The nature of the invention plainly shows it to have been one of those gross and rude essays towards writing, which were adopted in the early ages of the world; in order to extend farther the first method which they had employed of simple pictures, or representations of visible objects. Indeed, in after times, when alphabetical writing was introduced into Egypt, and the hieroglyphical was, of course, fallen into disuse, it is known, that the priests still employed the hieroglyphical characters, as a sacred kind of writing, now become peculiar to themselves, and serving to give an air of mystery to their learning and religion. In this state the Greeks found hieroglyphical writing when they began to have intercourse with Egypt; and some of their writers mistook this use, to which they found it applied, for the cause that had given rise to the invention.

With respect to the introduction of the use of written characters into our own country, it does not appear that the Britons had the use of letters before the Roman conquest. From the coming of Julius Cæsar, until the departure of the Romans from this island in 427, the Roman letters must have been perfectly familiar to the Britons, if it were only by means of the coins, inscriptions, &c., which they had constantly before them. Yet it is the opinion of the best authorities that writing was very little practised by the Britons till after the coming of St. Augustine in 596. The characters known as "Saxon," do not appear to have been introduced by the people whose name they bear. In fact, it seems tolerably certain that the Saxons were themselves unacquainted with letters, and that they merely adopted such as they found in use when they arrived in this country in 449, and gradually made such alterations in their form as gave them a somewhat distinctive character. Those who study the various specimens of Saxon hand-writing which have been preserved to our day, will doubtless find little difficulty in tracing the several gradations by which one form of a Roman character has imperceptibly given way to another. A beautiful specimen of what is called Roman-Saxon writing exists in what are called St. Cuthbert's Gospels, preserved in the Cottonian library. These were written by Eadfrith, and curiously illustrated by Ethelwald, monks of Lindisfarn, or Durham, in the time of St. Cuthbert, and who both in turn succeeded that prelate in the bishopric of Durham.

The use of letters in Scotland and Ireland was doubtless gained from Roman and Roman-British originals. The Irish have numerous traditions respecting their knowledge of letters, at a period prior to the invasion of the Romans, but they are unable to produce authentic evidence of the fact.

The several variations that took place in the forms of written characters from the time of the Norman conquest downwards, known as Norman, Modern Gothic, Old English, &c., we need not here notice; but it may be interesting to notice the several materials used by differ-

ent nations in the practice of this art. Tables of stone, of brass, and of wood were anciently employed by the Eastern nations, so that the characters were graven instead of written in the ordinary manner. According to Pliny, table-books of wood were in use before the time of Homer. The leaves of this book were composed of very thin slices of wood, finely planed, and polished. The writing was at first inscribed upon the bare wood, with an instrument called a *style*. Afterwards these tables were waxed over, so that what was written with the style might be easily effaced, and the wax renewed. These waxed table-books were found so convenient for correcting extemporary compositions, that they remained in use among the Greeks and Romans, long after the use of papyrus leaves and skins had become common. Waxed table-books at length gave way to books of ivory, which are still in use for memorandums, though the polished style, noticed by Chaucer in the following lines, is now superseded by the more convenient black lead pencil.

His fellow had a staffe tipped with horne,
A paire of tables all of iverie,
And a pointell polished fetouslie,
And wrote alwaie the names, as he stood,
Of all folke, that gave hem any good.

The bark and the leaves of trees have been employed for writing, and the use of the papyrus plant, of parchment, vellum, and different species of paper is sufficiently known. The chisel and the stylus gave way to the reed and the cane, and subsequently to the quill, or even the hair pencil (as now used by the Chinese) just in proportion as the materials for writing on, became more pliant and suitable to their use.

The different nations among whom this useful art has been cultivated, have adopted four several ways of directing their written characters. 1. The Hebrews, Chaldeans, Syrians, Arabians, and Egyptians begin each line on the right side, and write towards the left. 2. The Greeks, Latins, and all European nations write from the left side to the right. 3. The natives of China, Japan, Corea, Cochin China, &c., write from the top to the bottom of the page. 4. A method was anciently employed, which is called by the Greeks, *Boustrophedon*, from the resemblance it has to oxen turning with the plough, *i.e.*, turning at each end of the line, and always beginning a new line where the former line ended.

SEASONAL WILD FLOWERS. SEPTEMBER.

Farewell, ye banks, where late the primrose growing
Among fresh leaves its pallid stars displayed;
And the ground-ivy's balmy flowers blowing,
Trailed their festoons along the grassy shade.
Farewell! to richer scenes and summer pleasures,
Hedge-rows, engarlanded with many a wreath,
Where the wild roses hang their blushing treasures,
And to the evening gale the woodbines breathe.
Farewell! the meadows, where such various showers
Of beauty lurked among the fragrant hay,
Where orchis bloomed with freak'd and spotted flowers,
And lychnis, blushing like the new-born day.
The stock-dove now is heard in plaintive measure,
The cricket shrill, and wether's drowsy bell,
But to the sounds and scents of vernal pleasure,
Music, and dewy airs, a long farewell.—Mas. C. SMITH.

We have now arrived at the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," when soft and serene days give place to damp and chilly evenings, and when the early morning air reminds us very sensibly of the approach of winter. Yet so bounteously are nature's stores spread around us, "fruits well-matured and yellow corn," that a thanksgiving for summer's gifts, may well accompany the sigh at summer's departure.

An evening's ramble in search of wild flowers, must now only be indulged in under certain precautions. Cold fogs surprise the lingerer, and soon the damp ground and the chilly air suggest the need of warmer

clothing and shortened excursions. Ere the month closes, and takes with it many of the remaining blossoms of summer, we must notice some of those still adorning September's brow, and giving a pleasing cast to autumn scenery. The beautiful yellow flowers of the Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) flourish on sand-banks and in corn-fields on the western coast of England, and though the plant is a native of North America, it is so completely naturalized in the situations mentioned, that it is now included in our British Flora. Phillips tells us that the plant was first sent from Virginia to Padua in the year 1619, but at what period it reached England is uncertain. In Parkinson's *Garden of Pleasant Flowers*, published in 1629, it is, however, described as the Tree Primrose of Virginia, and the author does not speak of it as recently introduced. The stem of this plant is two or three feet high, clothed with grass-green leaves, of an ovate form. The flowers are numerous, large, and handsome, of a yellow, white, or purple colour, delicately fragrant. They expand at between six and seven in the evening, but are very short-lived. Phillips thus describes the opening of the blossoms:

We have frequently stood over this plant to watch the expansion of its flowers, the petals of which are confined together by means of the calyx, the ends of which meet over the corolla, and clasp each other by a hook. As the corolla swells in its confinement, the segments of the calyx separate at bottom, and discover the primrose corolla, which appears to be gradually inflating with a gaseous fluid until it acquires sufficient expansive force to burst the hooks of the calyx. When its petals are thus freed, they expand instantaneously to a cup-shape, and, in about half-an-hour, they are progressively spread, until they become quite flat.

Bernard Barton says of this lovely flower—

I love to watch at silent eve
Thy scattered blossoms' lonely light,
And have my inmost heart receive
The influence of that sight.
I love at such an hour to mark
Their beauty greet the night-breeze chill,
And shine, mid shadows gathering dark,
The garden's glory still.
For such, 'tis sweet to think, the while,
When cares and griefs the breast invade,
Is friendship's animating smile,
In sorrow's darkening shade.
Thus it bursts forth like thy pale cup,
Glistening amid its dewy tears,
And bears the sinking spirit up,
Amid its chilling fears.

Another plant which begins blowing in July, but still exhibits its small blue flowers is the Vervain (*Verbena officinalis*), perhaps less familiar to many of our readers than its relative of the garden or greenhouse (*Verbena triphylla*), which is a universal favourite on account of the delicious fragrance of its leaves. Many of the species are beautiful and ornamental plants when grown in pots or when planted in the flower-garden; but there is only one species indigenous to this country, and that is the common Vervain just named. It is a perennial found in dry waste grounds, by road-sides, or in pastures about villages. Miller says that it is never found above a quarter of a mile from a house. On this account it has been called Simpler's (or herb-gatherer's) Joy, but its close vicinity to a house has been disproved on several occasions, and Dr. Withering describes it as growing very plentifully at the foot of St. Vincent's rocks, all along the course of the river. The root of the Vervain is woody, the stem one foot and a half high, thickly set with deeply cut leaves. The spikes are slender, and several together compose a sort of panicle of small bluish inodorous flowers.

Vervain is repeatedly mentioned in ancient profane history, and it appears to have been much employed in the religious ceremonies of heathen nations. The Magi of the ancient Elamites, or Persians, carried branches of vervain in their hands, when they approached the altar

dedicated to the worship of the sun; and so superstitious were they in gathering the plant that they thought it necessary to do so at times when both the sun and moon were invisible, at the same time pouring honey and honeycomb on the earth as an atonement for robbing it of so precious an herb. The Greeks scarcely held it in less esteem than the Persians. Pliny says that it was with this plant only that they cleansed the festive table of Jupiter before any great solemnity took place, and hence he says the name *verbena* was derived. The Romans also employed this plant in sacred rites, sweeping their temples with it, and sprinkling holy water from its branches. Houses provided with this herb were supposed to be protected from evil spirits. The Druids also esteemed the Vervain nearly as much as the mistletoe, and offered sacrifices to the earth before they cut the plant in the Spring, which was an important ceremony. The knowledge of plants possessed by the Druids, and for which they were renowned even at Rome, was, doubtless, a powerful means of retaining the hold they had acquired over the minds of the ignorant. The medicinal qualities of herbs were attentively studied by them, and they were doubtless able in many instance to perform cures which must have appeared to the ignorant people around them as little less than miraculous. This herb has now passed into almost entire disuse, although there are some persons who still attribute to it the power of relieving the most violent chronic head-aches.

We must not allow the season to pass away without noticing a very curious family of plants, of which one of the later species flowers during the present month, though it is more rarely met with than some of those which have gone before it. Several of the species in this family are parasitical on the roots of other vegetables, and all are known as Broom-rape (*Orobanchæ*). The Greater Broom-rape flowers in June and July, and fixes itself on the roots of broom and furze, and also on those of the red-clover. Mr. Miller thinks that it has derived its name of Broom-rape from its being a robber of broom, living upon the juices of that plant. When it first makes its appearance it looks like asparagus just breaking through the ground; the stems rise six or eight inches high, without leaves, but with scales or bracts instead. Dingy brown flowers then make their appearance, being ranged on the stem like the flowers of the hyacinth, though without bearing any other resemblance to them. The seeds of this plant are extremely minute, and exude a glutinous substance, by which they are attached to the seeds of clover, and are in consequence often sown with it. The Less Broom-rape flowers rather later than the former, and is, perhaps, the more frequent. The latest species is the Branched Broom-rape (*Orobanchæ ramosa*), growing in moist fields, and parasitical on the roots of hemp. The flowers now in blossom are not quite so dingy as those of the other species, being of a light-purple tint. It is a singular fact observed by Vaucher of Geneva, that the seeds of this species of Broom-rape will lie inert in the soil for many years until they come in contact with the roots of hemp, when they immediately sprout forth in full vigour. No doubt some of our readers may have observed the Broom-rape, when passing a clover field, for its withered fungus-like appearance presents a great contrast to the healthy plants by which it is surrounded. It is, indeed, as wonderful in habit as it is unpleasing to view, this uncouth vegetable, which

... Plants its parasitic shoot
Intrusive on a stranger root,
And, fresh with life, presents to view
The sapless oak-leaf's dingy hue.

We have lingered among plants remaining to us from the months that are past, for, indeed, we have little to boast of in the floral gifts of September.

If when the mountain bugle wakes
The echoes of Killarney's lakes,

And Glena's waving crags incline
O'er sainted Mucrus' abbey shrine,
The *Arbutus* opens its pensile bells;
All beautiful itself, it tells,
In concert with the fading woods,
Of winds and equinoctial floods,
Which soon their gather'd rage shall pour;
And beauty, on that distant shore
Forsaken, left to bloom alone
Unnoticed on her desert throne.

The tree alluded to in these lines is the *Arbutus*, or Strawberry Tree, so called because its berries have the appearance of strawberries. It grows spontaneously on rocky limestone situations in the west of Ireland, where the peasants eat the fruit. This beautiful evergreen grows to the height of ten or fifteen feet. The flowers, which are yellowish-white, or red, open in September, October, and November, and are succeeded by the handsome fruit which remains until the following season, and gives the shrub a very lively appearance. Several species of *Arbutus* are cultivated for the adornment of our shrubberies, where they thrive well, if placed in warm, moist situations, on a loamy soil. These shrubs are very common in the south of Europe, and also in many parts of Asia. But whether the *Arbutus* exhibits its blossoms in our shrubberies, or the curious race of fungi springs up in our woods, we are equally reminded that we draw towards the close of the year. Thus Bishop Mant:—

Or if within the solitude
Of birchen copse or fir-tree wood,
On trunk decayed, or heaving root,
Some parasitic fungus shoot,
And nurtured by September dews
The enamel of his light diffuse:—
Though much you fail not to admire
Their parts, their structure, their attire,
The pillar-stem, the table-head,
As with a silken carpet spread,
Inlaid with many a brilliant dye
Of nature's high-wrought tapestry:
Of autumn's waning strength they speak,
And tell how nature, worn and weak,
Prepares her sceptre to resign,
And in inactive languor pine.

The different kinds of fungus scarcely come under consideration among *flowers*, but they are so numerous and so wonderful that we shall still have enough to excite our curiosity if we devote the period of the year which is unprolific of flowers to their study. Besides the different species of mushroom, there are numerous species inhabiting dead or decaying organic bodies, and forming a sort of link between the animal and the vegetable world. Many of them prey upon living plants much in the same way that vermin and other pests make animals their prey. What agriculturists call mildew and rust, are diseases caused by the attacks of fungi, which can only be detected by the microscope; indeed, that formidable evil known as *dry-rot*, arises from the presence of numerous minute species of fungi deriving subsistence from the timber, and reducing it to a state of decay. Some species of these curious vegetables are of a very large size, and are called puff-balls, because when mature they burst asunder, dispersing their contents in the form of dust. The rapidity of their growth is also very remarkable, many of the species springing up and coming to perfection in a few hours. These vegetables are to be met with in almost every situation during damp autumn weather; thus Mr. Sowerby describes a species first discovered by him in the outside gallery above the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. Many a cellar no doubt would likewise reward the diligent explorer with a sight of some of the smaller species; for the fungi can exist and will flourish in situations where they are excluded from the light, as at the bottom of deep mines, &c.